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Information Management System for Mine Action in Sudan

by Mohammad Kabir [United Nations Mine Action Programme in Sudan]

The Information Management System for Mine Action is a globally used and internationally accepted database and software system that allows mine-action programmes to efficiently correlate and evaluate information. In addition, IMSMA provides powerful tools to rapidly disseminate information on hazardous areas and other important aspects of mine action by providing digital as well as printed maps and statistics.

All U.N. mine-action offices and Operations and Quality Assurance Officers in Sudan are equipped with an IMSMA system capable of receiving, analysing and displaying many types of data ranging from minefield locations, clearance operations and mine-risk education activities to agricultural development plans and movements of internally displaced persons. Following the successful establishment of an IMSMA facility at the United Nations Mine Action Office in Khartoum in April 2002, the Northern Regional Mine Action Office in Kadugli in August 2002 and the Southern Regional Mine Action Office in Juba in March 2003, a substantial amount of data concerning suspected and actual mined areas, mined roads and landmine victims was collected and entered. A large amount of information on clearance operations, unexploded ordnance locations, ammunition dumps and the opening of roads has been collected and recorded during the last two years of operations.

Subsequent correlation and analysis of the information demonstrate how the landmine threat in Sudan has a significant and negative impact on humanitarian action by restricting the access routes of the U.N. Mission in Sudan and also access of humanitarian aid to needy populations.

Mine-action operations in Sudan have been enhanced greatly because of the potential for adding support tools to IMSMA. Support tools for capturing data on road assessment, road clearance/verification, quality assurance, victim assistance and MRE were designed in-country. Some of these tools have been shared with other countries such as Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Mozambique. The data captured has en-

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IMSMA



hanced the information flow and increased the pace of the mine-action activities.

The information-management policy document,¹ specifically tailored to the nature of Sudanese mine-action operations, is a document supporting the systematic and methodological procedures of information management in the mine-action programme. This document explains the modules used in IMSMA and its supportive tools, the information flow in the Sudan Mine Action Programme, responsibility of the individual for information flow and other relevant data-management issues.

A training curriculum for the operational use of IMSMA has been developed for the Sudan MAP. The training curriculum includes all the topics that are used for data management at the operational level, such as planning and other management issues.

IMSMA is used in Sudan as an actual operations tool. To this end, comprehensive training was conducted in two sessions, one in Khartoum in October 2005 and the other in Rumbek in February 2006, for the Operations and Quality Assurance Officers on the use of IMSMA. The training brought great changes in the information flow and reporting procedures. IMSMA is widely used within the programme in day-to-day operational activities, planning and other management issues.

All mine-action offices in Sudan can produce IMSMA output, such as maps, graphic presentations and data for planning, to educate people about the impact of landmines/UXO and to reduce the risk associated with mines, an interest broadly shared by the U.N. community, aid organisations and other interested parties.

The information-management section is working closely with United Nations Mission in Sudan, the World Food Programme, the International Organization for Migration,

the U.N. Joint Logistics Centre and the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to develop a common system (not IMSMA, but compatible with it) that can facilitate integrated planning for humanitarian interventions in Sudan. In particular, this system could assist with tracking internally displaced persons/refugees and anticipating their movements and proximity to known/suspected mined or dangerous areas. ♦

See Endnotes, page 112



Mohammad Kabir holds master's degrees in computer science, civil engineering and finance/accounting, respectively. He has more than 13 years of comprehensive experience in the information-management section of humanitarian mine-action work in the countries of Afghanistan, Yemen and Iraq. He has worked at the United Nations Mine Action Programme in Sudan since September 2002 and is currently the Chief of Information Management for this programme based in Khartoum, Sudan.

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